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ABSTRACT

The transition of students from secondary school to college or university was reviewed by a special committee of the Council of Ontario Universities. Issues considered include: admission standards, subject requirements, advanced placement, program gaps and overlaps, evaluation and testing, transfers between colleges and universities, impact of funding on admissions and standards, diversity in students and programs, and French-speaking students. Recommendations are offered in each of these areas. (LBH)

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CONSTRUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP: A UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE

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THE REPORT FROM THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON THE INTERFACE STUDY

Council of Ontario Universities
Conseil des Universités de l'Ontario

130 St. George Street
Suite 8039
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T4

March, 1977

77-5

HE 009 017

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June 8, 1977

The Honourable Dr. Harry C. Parrott,
Minister of Colleges and Universities,
Mowat Block,
Queen's Park,
Toronto, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Minister:

I wrote on March 15 to transmit the report of our Special Committee on the Interface Study, indicating that we expected to bring forward a system viewpoint on the questions when our member institutions had completed their review of the report.

Having provided an opportunity for the expression of institutional viewpoints, we returned the report to the agenda of our Council meeting on June 2. It was apparent from an analysis of institutional positions that the report of the Special Committee can serve as a representation of the consensus of the university community. There is much more agreement with the recommendations of the committee than there is disagreement, and where disagreement exists, it tends to be over matters of procedure rather than principle, or to issue from concern about appearing to interfere with the secondary school system.

The Council therefore agreed formally to approve the report, and to so inform the ministries along with a covering letter which notes the major areas where there are some reservations within the university system.

The first several recommendations in the report dealt with qualifications for university entrance. Most universities supported the common present policy of a minimum level for general admissability, and this was in most cases defined as a 60% average obtained in six level 5 courses. There were two recommendations on core course requirements: the universities collectively favoured the concept of a core curriculum for university bound students, although there were a few differences in detail, as one might expect. At the same time, the universities wished to preserve a balance between flexibility in curriculum choice and competency in core subjects. Concern was also expressed over the universities appearing to dictate curriculum to the secondary school system.

The report contained a recommendation favouring the continuation of, but not the expansion of, special programmes for entry with less than a completed honours graduation diploma. Where there was dissent with this recommendation, it arose from questions both on the validity of the continuance of Year 5, and the appropriateness of a system

cont..

which, given the existence of Year 5, might not allow enough flexibility for students to proceed to university earlier.

The report recommended a province-wide system of assessing the achievements by subject of university bound students, to be established by the Ministry of Education after consultation with other interested parties, including the universities. The universities agreed that some form of assessment is required, and that this should be undertaken at the secondary level. While there was a consensus that the universities find Year 5 marks a reasonably reliable predictor of success at university, there is concern about equity in admissions and in the awarding of scholarships, given the variance in school grading practices. Again, there were reservations expressed over an assessment procedure which might have an undue steering effect on the secondary school curriculum. Accordingly, several institutions preferred a plan of measuring skills in basic tools such as mathematics and English, rather than subject testing. The universities were most reluctant to themselves develop examinations for university entrance.

Contrary to the impression abroad in some quarters, the committee viewed as the cornerstone of its report the recommendations about an ongoing system of consultation between the secondary and post-secondary sectors. A standing Provincial Committee on Curriculum Development and Assessment was proposed, with responsibilities including the development of a thorough articulation in curricular matters between universities and secondary schools. While there were some differences among the universities on the composition of such a committee, there was general agreement that its creation is desirable, and that it should provide a vehicle to achieve real cooperation between the secondary and post-secondary systems. It is this question of articulation, to the end of establishing a genuine "interface", with which we are most concerned. We are also hopeful that the dialogue which we envision between the two levels of educational institution can be paralleled by greater consultation between the two ministries responsible for their support.

I have also been asked to note that the universities consider there to be a real need for an ongoing monitoring of the educational system, since relatively little can be learned from hastily executed research, however conscientiously those responsible may have undertaken their assignments.

May I stress in conclusion our profound hope that the exercise represented by the Interface Study is the beginning of a continuing dialogue, which will be characterized by frankness and openness conjoined with an understanding of the various views of different parties. We look forward to further discussions on these fundamental policy matters with your Ministry, the Ministry of Education, and other groups.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Monahan
Executive Director

cc: Hon. Thomas L. Wells
Dr. W.C. Winegard

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This committee was established by the Council of Ontario Universities to prepare a draft submission by COU to the Joint Ministerial Review of the transition of students from secondary school to college or university, called, if somewhat unfortunately, the "Interface Study".

The committee was asked to analyze the research studies commissioned for that review, to respond to a set of twelve major questions posed by the Ministries of Education and of Colleges and Universities, and to report back to COU not later than mid-January, 1977. The reporting date was determined by the deadline given to COU to make its submission by January 31, 1977, which, in turn, was based on the Ministries' expectation of a mid-November date for the publication of their commissioned research studies. A two month delay in their publication, however, led to an extension to March 31, 1977, of the Ministries' deadline, and thus the time limit for this committee was extended to the end of February.

The committee met ten times between November 26, 1976, and February 25, 1977. Early decisions were made to group and order the twelve questions* posed by the Ministries and to redraft them from a university point of view. Plans were made to establish a

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*See Appendix A

file of documents, in addition to the expected Review Studies, to serve as a basis for our deliberations. The universities were surveyed to identify all relevant documents, such as internal research studies and committee reports.

The committee grouped the twelve questions in the following order (numbers refer to chapters of this report):

II Admission policies - Question 7, 8, 9, 10

III Programme gaps and overlaps - Questions 4, 3, 5

IV Evaluation/Testing - Question 6

V Other issues - Questions 11, 12, 1, 2

As a general principle, the committee decided to incorporate its remarks on the published Review Studies mainly within its treatment of those twelve questions.

Chapter II

POLICIES ON ADMISSIONS TO UNIVERSITY

In this chapter, we will deal with questions 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the Joint Ministerial Review, and in that order.

A. Admission Standards

Question 7: Are university and college admission standards appropriate? Given the limited public resources available, do these admission standards serve the needs of the individuals, society as a whole, and of the institutions themselves?

After discussion, the committee decided to redraft the question as follows:

> Given the government's policy of accessiblity to Ontario universities of qualified students holding the SSHGD, are the universities' requirements and expectations appropriate?

The committee decided to answer this question in the affirmative. As a general background to that answer, and to those that follow, we note that the 1960's and early 1970's witnessed extensive changes in the educational institutions in Ontario, an era that seems now fast drawing to a close. The effect of government policy during that period, whatever the intention, was to make education very salient to the public eye and an increasing proportion of a burgeoning group of young people looked forward as a matter of course

to post-secondary education on the completion of high school. To accommodate the swelling numbers, the existing universities expanded their staffs and physical plants at a rapid rate, while a number of new universities were established. Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology were created to provide opportunities for those whose interests and aptitudes suggested the desirability of a more immediately practical programme of post-secondary education than the universities are intended to provide.

This increase in the number of candidates for post-secondary education, and the expansion of existing institutions and establishment of new ones to accommodate them, was coupled with a change in belief about education that has an important bearing on our present concerns. That was a change as to what constituted an appropriate programme of education at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. There was a move away from the structured curriculum and towards the provision of a large range of optional subjects from among which students could choose, and so fashion a programme of study best suited to their individual abilities and needs. The new philosophy appears to have been that educational opportunities should serve the purpose of individual self-fulfillment, and no one can prescribe for that; the new philosophy also assumes that in a technological age where rapid change is the rule, the students' future needs will be best

served by the development of problem solving skills (which may be done in a variety of subject matter contexts), and not by the acquisition of a prescribed body of knowledge that tomorrow may be obsolete.

This new philosophy achieved its full expression in the years following 1967, the year in which departmental examinations for Grade 13 were abolished. Local school boards now had virtual autonomy in implementing curriculum guidelines, and individual teachers gained considerable freedom in defining the content of particular courses. Very rapidly, students emerged from the schools with quite different background preparations. The universities responded, strongly encouraged by the BIU system of financing that was introduced for 1967-68, by adapting their admission requirements to suit the varied backgrounds of the students. Subject requirements for admission were reduced in number and admission averages were interpreted with flexibility. Many courses of study within the universities, especially in the non-professional and less sequential subjects, became less structured, permitting students a larger range of options in making up their programmes.

It seems clear that, during that period of rapid growth, the universities changed their requirements and expectations to conform to the preparation and expectations of the students. The

government's policy of accessibility and its method of funding perhaps made such conformity inevitable, but there is reason to believe that the universities were not all unwilling; they also were caught up in the changed attitudes towards education.

But now appears the time,for second thoughts. Recent policy changes announced by the Ministry of Education have reinstated core subjects in senior public school and the early years of high school. An extension of the core requirement to the later years of high school appears to be in the offing. This, coupled with greater Ministry control over the content of core courses, will assure greater uniformity in students' programmes thoughout the province. These changes, particularly as they affect preparation in mathematics and English studies, will be enthusiastically welcomed by the universities. The further step proposed by the Ministry of Education, of providing a mechanism to eliminate some of the variability in grading from school to school, if fully implemented, will go a long way to enable the universities to apply admission criteria in a uniform and fair way.

Despite the variations in curriculum and course content, and the uneven grading standards which are now applied, it remains true that a student's standing in his Year 5 work remains the best predictor available of his likely success in university. While this is true, it is also true that the closer the student's

average approaches the minimum requirement of 60%, the smaller is the likelihood that he will successfully complete a university programme. This raises the question of whether the minimum average for admission should be set somewhat above 60%.

There are two things to be said about this. The first is that the question only arises for those programmes for which there is no limitation on enrolment. For many professional and other highly specialized programmes where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, the admission average is, in practice, already well in excess of 60%. Second, for those general programmes in arts and science where reserve capacity exists in some of the province's universities, an increase in the minimum average for admission would seem undesirable. The high school average, while the best available, is not a perfect predictor of university achievement and a significant proportion of those entering with the minimum do complete their degrees. It seems desirable that they should have the chance. Moreover, with the changes now being introduced into the high schools, future students with the minimum average should be even better prepared than their predecessors to do work at the university level.

ECOMMENDATION

11.1 The committee, then, recommends:

That the universities continue their present policy of

defining the minimum level of qualification for general admissibility as a 60% average obtained in six level 5 courses distributed as recommended below.

B. Subject Requirements

Question 8: Should universities and colleges require for admission, preparation in specific subjects with standardized content?

After discussion, the committee decided to redraft the question, and to divide it into two parts:

> Under what circumstances should universities require for admission, preparation in specific subjects;
>
> and in those subjects which serve as foundations for university courses, how best can the universities contribute to the specifying of their content?

In answering the first part of the question, the committee made a number of observations and assumptions:

- that not all secondary school students plan to attend university;
- that the aims and objectives of secondary education include

much more than the preparation of some students for university;

- that the main function of Year 5 is preparation for post-secondary education;
- that universities, as institutions of higher learning concerned with academic and professional excellence, have a right to expect their incoming students to have an intellectual preparation adequate to university level study;
- that universities have an obligation to state clearly the preparation they require of those applying for admission.

It seemed reasonable to us, then, to expect that students planning to attend university should experience a broad educational preparation during their first four years of secondary school. A background in English or *Français* and mathematics is essential for most, if not all university programmes; therefore, all students should study these subjects at least to level 4. Since Canada is officially a bilingual country, French or *Anglais* should also be included, while other languages would be useful. Further, every university-bound student should have some background in History, Geography, and, in this present age, at least some exposure to science.

The committee, therefore, endorses the first recommendation of the Ontario Universities' Council on Admissions' report on minimum academic requirements for Ontario universities, which

states:

RECOMMENDATION

11.2 *"That students planning to enter an Ontario University have, by the end of year 4, credits in the following:*

English or Français - 4 credits;

Mathematics - 4 credits;

French (Anglais) or another language - 3 credits;

Science - 3 credits;

Geography and History - 3 credits

These are the minimum requirements."[1]

The committee did not think that such a core programme, which specifies only 63% (17 of 27 credits) of the minimum required for the Secondary School Graduation Diploma (SSGD), would be unduly restrictive for university-bound students. In the ten credits remaining, students would have ample opportunity to pursue other academic interests.

Further, in the judgement of the committee, Year 5 should be considered as mainly preparatory for future post-secondary education. The honours diploma (SSHGD) requires a minimum of six credits at level 5, with many students obtaining more than the minimum. By this time, many students have reasonably well defined educational goals and should be able to undertake a more specialized programme, e.g., primarily mathematics and science

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[1] Ontario Universities' Council on Admissions, "Submission to the Council of Ontario Universities on Minimum Academic Requirements for Ontario Universities," 1977, p.1.

in preparation for university science or engineering programmes. On the other hand, many students may wish to continue a more general programme of studies.

With this difference in mind, the committee endorses the second recommendation of the same OUCA report, as follows:

RECOMMENDATION

11.3 *"That students applying to an Ontario University, while fulfilling the stated requirements for the SSHSD, must also satisfy the following minimum [admission] requirements:*

(a) Two Year 5 credits, one in English (Français) and one in another language, or one in mathematics and one in science, or one in mathematics and one in English (Français); and

(b) Of the six Year 5 credits required, five of these must be chosen from English (Français), French (Anglais), other languages, mathematics, science (e.g., Biology, Chemistry, Physics), and Social Science (e.g., Geography, History)."[2]

In considering the second part of our redrafted question, namely, how best the universities could contribute to specifying the curricular content of some secondary school subjects, the

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[2] Ibid., pp. 1 - 2.

committee recognized, at the outset, the professional integrity of our colleagues in the secondary schools. It had no wish to raise anxieties over what might seem to them an unwarranted bid on the part of universities to dictate secondary school curricular content. However, because Year 5 is mainly preparatory to some form of post-secondary education, a narrowing of university-based interest primarily to the curricular content of Year 5 might ease those anxieties.

On the other hand, the committee was also well aware of the present lack of reliable comparability of curricular content in the same subjects as actually taught in different secondary schools. This commonly held university view was confirmed by the Joint Ministerial Review Project III, which concluded that "there is evidence of diversity in what is being taught in secondary school courses and the level of competence at which teaching is aimed."[3]

The committee concluded that the principle guiding our deliberations on this matter should be that of cooperative partnership. Organizations of secondary school and university administrators, organizations of teachers by discipline at both levels, and, indeed, the Ministries of Education and of Colleges and Universities all have a legitimate stake in that determination of

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[3] A.J.C. King et al, Continuity and Diversity of Courses (The Secondary/Post-Secondary Interface Project III: Nature of Programs), Vol. 1, 1976, p. xxvii.

curricular content.

Further, the committee judged that, since the issues of specifying curricular content and of assessing achievement in mastering that content are fundamentally inseparable in any logical instructional model, it would see two roles for members of the university community. They should be willing to participate in the construction and implementation of upper secondary school syllabuses, perhaps as members of Ministry of Education curriculum task forces. They also should be willing to serve as examiners of achievement, acting in partnership with Ministry of Education and secondary school personnel assigned to that task.

To make such university participation possible, we therefore recommend:

RECOMMENDATION

11.4 *That the Minister of Education, in collaboration with the Minister of Colleges and Universities, the Council of Ontario Universities, the Committee of Presidents of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, establish a standing Provincial Committee on Curriculum Development and Assessment for secondary schools.*

The committee should have two functions. The first, in terms of curricular content, would be *advisory* to the Minister of Education. The second, in terms of assessment, would be *executive*. It could be responsible, for example, for establishing a number of examining boards in various subject areas, provincial where enrolments were small, regional where large. The executive function could be implemented largely through channels and personnel that already exist in the Ministry of Education. Universities would have to agree to provide personnel to serve as examiners. The committee, at the provincial level, would monitor continuously, through the reports of its various examination boards, the achievements of secondary school graduates, and, on the basis of information received from its examiners, advise the two Ministries on desirable changes in direction, or simply in emphasis, of the curriculum.

C. Non-Year 5 Routes to University

Question 9: Should universities be encouraged to admit students directly from the Secondary School Graduation Diploma level (Grade 12), or students with even less background and preparation?

Recognizing that there are now in existence a number of special programmes and entrance testing procedures at various universities, the committee redrafted this question as follows:

Under what circumstances should universities admit students with less than a completed Secondary School Honours Graduation Diploma (Year 5)?

Following an informal survey of present practices at Ontario universities, the committee noted that students in the above category have a wide variety of backgrounds and expectations. These range from the mature student, with little formal education at the secondary school level, all the way to the exceptionally gifted younger secondary school student who is both emotionally and academically ready for advanced studies at the university level. Since most universities presently admit highly motivated "mature" students, and have internal procedures to deal with the gifted, younger student on an individual basis, the committee decided to focus its attention on the "middle range" of students who are seeking, for a variety of reasons, a non-conventional route to university admission, and for whom a variety of special programmes currently exists.

Four Ontario universities have a *preliminary or qualifying year* that has been linked historically to those universities. Students entering these programmes may receive credit for studies completed at the Year 5 level from Ontario or other jurisdictions. In all four cases, students must have achieved the equivalent of 65% or better in Year 4 and, in one case, have received a

letter of recommendation from their high school principal. At least one other university offers students, concurrently with their Year 4 studies, courses in the evenings during the winter, and during the summer, as preparation for entrance to first year university. Another university has just approved the seventh year of a redesigned, experimental transitional year programme for a limited number of socio-economically disadvantaged, yet intellectually capable, students.

Five universities have stated policies which will allow *superior students* from Year 4 to enter first year. In one case, these students are placed on probation, and at least three institutions require a recommendation from the student's principal. It may well be that other universities accept superior students directly from Year 4, but do not wish to appear to encourage the practice by officially stating it.

At least two universities have *"concurrent" programmes* for students from semesterized high schools, which allow students to enter university in January, provided they complete simultaneously the required number of Year 5 courses. Finally, two universities have introduced *summer programmes* for a limited number of excellent Year 4 students. If the student's performance in these summer programmes is satisfactory, he or she is then admitted directly to first year.

Our best estimate suggests that current numbers in all of these programmes together constitute less than 2% of the total number of first year students, and that enrolments in some of the programmes are on the decline.

These various methods of entrance to university programmes have been devised to serve the special needs of a relatively small number of students. It is recognized, for example, that there are some students who, after the completion of Year 4, are academically and emotionally ready for entrance to certain university programmes, and that there are a few students in the secondary schools who, for one reason or another, have become disenchanted with the high school system and need to move to a new environment, but who are not quite ready academically to move directly into first year university. There is yet another small group of students, both internal and external to the Ontario secondary school system, who have mixed academic backgrounds (i.e., those who have accelerated in high school and have taken some level 5 subjects, or students who have come from other jurisdictions and have the equivalent of some but not all of the six level 5 credits required) and do not readily fit into the normal stream of students entering university.

For these reasons, then, the committee endorsed the continuation of the presently existing special programmes, with the under-

standing that they not be expanded, nor any new ones created.

RECOMMENDATION

11.5 *That Ontario universities presently offering special programmes to admit students with less than a completed Secondary School Honours Graduation Diploma, or its equivalent, continue to do so, but on the understanding they not be expanded; and that no new such programmes be introduced.*

D. Advanced Placement

Question 10: Should universities and colleges be encouraged to give advanced placement to students who have demonstrated a superior level of achievement at secondary school?

The committee reworded this question as follows:

Under what circumstances should universities give advanced placement by giving credit to, or by waiving prerequisites for, students who have demonstrated competence?

All universities in Ontario have the problem of dealing with students who, by reasons of prior employment training, of taking enriched programmes or courses at certain secondary schools, or

of moving into Ontario from other areas, have a competence in certain university level courses. The committee agreed that it would be inappropriate, uneconomic and inequitable to demand that these students take courses in which they have such competence.

Two questions, however, arise from that agreement: how to determine the level of achievement of students in this category; and, secondly, if competence can be demonstrated, should students be excused from taking the regular total number of courses required to complete a given programme?

In answer to the first question, since it is common practice for universities to give advanced placement examinations to determine levels of student competence, the committee endorses the continuation of that practice, and urges universities to publicize well the time and place of such examinations. On the second question, the committee recommends that, while a student may be excused from taking a given course or courses within a programme by reason of demonstrated competence, all students should take the full total number of courses required in that programme.

RECOMMENDATION

11.6 *That Ontario universities waive prerequisites for given courses for those students who have demonstrated competence without, however, waiving the total number of courses needed to complete a programme.*

Chapter III

PROGRAMME GAPS AND OVERLAPS

Gaps, Overlaps, and What to Do About Them

In this chapter, the committee will deal with questions 4, 3, and 5, in that order. Because of the interrelatedness of these questions, any recommendations will be reserved for the end of this chapter.

A. Gaps

Question 4: Are there gaps between programs at the different levels which make it difficult for students to effect a smooth transfer from secondary to post-secondary education?

The committee decided that it was not necessary to reword this question to accord with a university perspective. One might ask, however, what is meant by a "gap"?

The Joint Ministerial Review Project III study understood a gap to mean a gap between programmes, where material required at one level is not taught at a preceding one.[4] It seemed to the committee that such a situation would not constitute a problem for very long, unless there existed a serious lack of

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[4] A.J.C. King et al, Continuity and Diversity of Courses (The Secondary/Post-Secondary Interface Project III: Nature of Programs), Vol. 1, 1976, p. v.

exchange of curricular information between the two levels. In such a case, false assumptions tend to be made by teachers in first year university courses, which lead inevitably to irritation, frustration, and occasionally, disparaging complaints about the quality of teaching at the secondary school level. Such remarks obviously add little to the resolution of this problem of gaps.

The Project III study, referred to above, revealed many gaps between secondary school level 5 courses and university first year courses in five subject areas (English, French, Physics, Mathematics, and History) in both anglophone and francophone institutions. That report concluded that "subject coordination across institutional levels at the interface between secondary schools and universities is almost non-existant."[5]

Thus, it would appear that our answer to question 4 must be a simple: Yes!

The committee, however, wishes to draw attention to another possible interpretation of gap in that there is a basic discontinuity between two distinct types of educational experience. First year university is not a Grade 14. We learned of some misguided attempts to promote smooth transfers for some students which blur that distinction. For example, there have been

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[5] Ibid., p. xxviii.

cases where secondary school teachers have modelled substantial portions of their level 5 science courses on those of nearby university first year courses. The motive apparently, is to assure better records for their students when they take what is essentially the same material in a university level course. Needless to say, this committee utterly deplores such attempts, which have as distorting an effect on the educational experience of Year 5 students as the former departmental examinations seem to have had.

The committee nevertheless recognized that many students have difficult times adjusting to the greater personal freedom and intellectual demands characteristic of university study. Other students thrive under these same conditions. Rites of passage have their place in all cultures. The problem seems to require a much greater amount of liaison between academic counsellors on both sides of the transfer. It is the belief of the committee that these counsellors must talk to each other much more than they do now, although we fully concede that the tasks facing such counsellors go far beyond mere liaison.

Our conclusions, then, on the question of "gaps" lead in two directions. The first is towards the need for better exchange of curricular information between the secondary school and univer-

sity levels, dealt with above in Chapter II.B. The second is towards the need for closer liaison between counsellors of students on either side of the border.

B. Overlaps and/or Duplications

Question 3: What is the extent of the overlap and duplication in programming and course offerings at the secondary schools, colleges and universities? Is this duplication at an acceptable level as an accommodation to the goal of fostering greater response to individual differences, or is it unnecessary and uneconomic?

The committee decided that this question could be interpreted from a university perspective by simply deleting the word "colleges". In effect, the question is the obverse of the question on "gaps", in that "overlap and duplication" refer to the presence of the same or similar curricular content at the two levels.

In its investigation of this situation, the Project III study of the Joint Ministerial Review found that "there is evidence of diversity in what is being taught in secondary school courses and the level of competence at which teaching is aimed."[6]

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[6] Ibid., p. xxvii.

To meet this problem, many university faculties and departments use diagnostic testing to stream their first year students, and devise special courses for those students requiring further preparation for university level work. In such serious cases, duplications obviously result. When such diagnostic testing reveals serious deficiencies in fundamental techniques, and/or skills possessed by significant numbers of students, especially in subjects that build on successive foundations of material, universities have tended to establish remedial courses, sometimes with, but most often without, academic credit. Such remedial courses obviously duplicate material at a secondary school level, and should have no permanent place in a university curriculum. The committee would certainly expect these courses to be phased out as a greater curricular coordination is achieved among the province's secondary schools.

Not all university level treatments of the same curricular material as taught in the secondary schools, however, should be judged as unnecessarily duplicative. Pointing to what we dub the "helix principle", the committee recognized that, for example, a level 5 treatment of Voltaire's Candide, of Newton's laws of motion, or of a Shakespearean play, would not be expected to penetrate the material as deeply or as fully as treatments proper to a university level of study.

The committee further recognized the need for universities to respond to the different needs of their students. For example, a science department would normally mount a variety of first year courses. One might be designed to accommodate those of its students pursuing a general liberal education requiring some science. Another course might be designed as a "service course" for the special needs of students in cognate disciplines, while other courses might be reserved for the department's own "hard-core" specialists. Then too, many departments in subjects taught in the secondary schools have to accommodate those of their students who decide to begin study in that subject after having left secondary school.

Thus, the committee concluded that much of what might appear to be unnecessary duplication of secondary school curricular content in first year university courses is, in fact, absolutely necessary and desirable. However, the committee would agree that the inclusion, for remedial reasons, in university curricula of basic material that should have been taught at the secondary level is neither economic nor desirable, albeit necessary in the present situation.

C. What to Do

Question 5: Is there a need for more articulation and co-ordination in curriculum between secondary and post-secondary education?

At this stage of our deliberations, the committee predictably answered this question with a resounding: Yes! Setting aside its aversion to the use of the term "interface", the committee thought that an acceptable use of that term would be to describe an ideal relationship between the universities and the secondary schools, that is, a face-to-face encounter between *(inter)* two distinct entities: Ontario's universities and secondary schools. In recent years, that relationship would appear rather to have been *dos-à-dos*, as the secondary schools overemphasize their educational responsibilities towards non-university bound students, and universities, Pilate-like, wash their hands, not without much wringing, of the deplorable deterioration of standards in the secondary schools.

On the basis of surveys of teachers on both sides of the "interface", the Project III study of "gaps" and "duplications" discerned two categories of what they called coordinating mechanisms. "One category included mechanisms for coordination within each discipline; the other, mechanisms for coordination across institutional levels. 'Coordination' was defined in the context of such activities as choosing appropriate methods and materials for study and determining standards to be achieved by students."[7]

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[7] Ibid., p. xxv.

That study's finding about the present situation revealed that, "indeed, if one takes out those formal units in schools and universities which provide general liaison, there is essentially nothing left of a formal coordinating system. What is done, is done by modestly financed voluntary organizations such as the science or mathematics teachers' associations and the remnants of consultant and advisory teams from the Ministry of Education and Boards of Education."[8]

Thus, in line with our answer above to question 8, the committee urges a thorough articulation and coordination in curricular matters between universities and secondary schools. This should take place especially within single disciplines, and, where appropriate, locally, regionally, and provincially. The committee would repeat here what it noted earlier, that "organizations of secondary school and university administrators, organizations of teachers or discipline at both levels, and, indeed, the Ministries of Education and of Colleges and Universities, all have a legitimate stake in that determination of curricular content."[9]

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[8] Ibid., p. xxvi.

[9] See above Chapter II.B, pp. 12 - 13.

Therefore the committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION

III.1 *a) That an additional responsibility of the recommended Provincial Committee on Curriculum Development and Assessment for secondary schools be to establish a thorough articulation in curricular matters between universities and secondary schools, within single disciplines, and where appropriate, more broadly at the local, regional, and provincial levels;*

b) that there be closer liaison between secondary school and university counsellors.

Chapter IV

EVALUATION/TESTING

Question 6: Are present methods of assessing student readiness and achievement at the secondary schools, colleges and universities adequate? Do they meet the appropriate needs of students and parents as well as those of the institutions themselves and society as a whole?

A. Background

The question of "assessing student readiness and achievement", especially for those moving from the secondary to the post-secondary level, has received much attention recently, and from a variety of sources. Editorial writers, university professors (both individually and as members of university committees), the Ontario Teachers' Federation, and the Minister of Education have noted the "widespread concern about levels of academic progress ... being achieved in the schools."[10]

While few wish a return to the former style of departmental examinations at the end of Grade 13, there does seem to be a widely held view among educators that there should be some

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[10] "Statement by the Hon. Thomas L. Wells, Minister of Education, to the Ontario Legislature, November 26, 1976," p.3 (quoting from the May 1976 Brief of the Ontario Teachers' Federation to the Cabinet).

standardized, province-wide form of testing student achievement in at least some subjects at that level. The Joint Ministerial Review Project 1 Report notes that 68% of secondary school teachers and 83% of university faculty favour such a view.[11] Indeed, that same report records that "both secondary school teachers and university faculty in particular are most likely to mention marks from Grade 13 provincial examinations as the best method of assessing students for admission [into universities]."[12]

The Ontario Universities' Council on Admissions has recently adopted a recommendation of its Ad Hoc Committee on Minimum Admission Requirements for Ontario Universities, "that the Council of Ontario Universities request the Ministry of Education to develop tests in verbal and mathematical skills for all Secondary School students, and that the verbal requirements include the writing of an essay."[13]

The Principal of Queen's University has received a report from his Faculty of Arts and Science which strongly recommends that an entrance examination for Ontario universities be established.[14]

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[11] Canadian Facts Co. Limited, Secondary/Post-Secondary Interface Study Project 1: Roles and Responsibilities of the Secondary and Post-Secondary Institutions, Vol. 1, 1976, pp. 94 - 95.

[12] Ibid., pp. 108 - 109.

[13] Ontario Universities' Council on Admissions, "Submission to the Council of Ontario Universities on Minimum Academic Requirements for Ontario Universities," 1977, p. 2.

[14] Queen's University, Faculty of Arts and Science, "Comments on the High School - University Interface," 1976, pp. 3 - 4.

The University of Toronto task force on admissions has recommended that entrance examinations in English be required of all applicants, and proficiency in mathematics be required of some applicants.[15]

At Carleton University, all entering students with less than second class standing in Year 5 English or its equivalent, are required to take an entrance test in English.[16]

The Minister of Education has already convened a "Technical Work Group" to devise for his Ministry "a definite plan of action on how best to improve testing and evaluation in the classroom...,"[17] which, while it has additional and broader terms of reference, is expected to deal with the question, on a province-wide basis, of the assessment of student readiness for the transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

B. Committee Deliberations

The committee redrafted question 6 as follows:

Are the present methods of assessing student readiness and

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[15]University of Toronto, "Final Report: Task Force on Admissions and Entrance Awards Criteria," 1976, pp. 3 - 4.

[16]This was the result of a senate motion passed in March, 1976. It was implemented by the senate executive in July for the fall 1976 registration period.

[17]"Statement by the Hon. Thomas L. Wells, Minister of Education, to the Ontario Legislature, November 26, 1976," p. 5.

achievement at the secondary school level and at the university level adequate to meeting the needs of universities and students with respect to university entry?

However, if the answer to the question thus posed were too narrowly focussed, it would not serve a useful purpose. If the emphasis were placed on the word "present", the committee's immediate, but not very helpful, answer would be a resounding "No"! Must the question also assume congruence between the needs of university-bound students and those of the universities receiving them? Are they always the same?

In order to get a better grasp on the real problems facing the universities as regards this question on testing, the committee discussed a number of distinctions.

One of these recognized the major difference between the question of testing for general admission purposes and that for the specific needs of specialized university programmes. The committee agreed to concentrate on the more general concern.

Another distinction was made between using the Ontario School Record as an instrument on which to base predictions of student success at the university level, and as an instrument on which to base evaluations of levels of competence in individual subjects, or indeed, of general linguistic or mathematical skills.

On the first point, documents on file with the committee revealed a strong consensus at the university level that the present sort of admissions data on students provides as adequate a predictor of general university success as the former sort based on the province-wide departmental examinations.

For example, a Queen's University Faculty of Applied Science study compared Grade 13 marks and First Year marks earned by four classes of their students in 1962-63, 1964-65, 1968-69, and 1975-76, thus spanning the period before and after the demise of the departmental examinations. The correlation co-efficients of Grade 13 and First Year marks were remarkably consistent at 0.61, 0.62, 0.75 and 0.64 respectively.[18] This particular result was confirmed on a broader base by the Joint Ministerial Review Project II study, which concluded that "even without making adjustments to control for variation in marking standards, predictions regarding applicants' performances in university which are made on the basis of raw school marks are just as accurate as predictions made in the past on the basis of departmental examinations results."[19]

With respect to the second half of this distinction, however, there

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[18] Queen's University, Faculty of Applied Science, "Postscript to Faculty of Applied Science Response Concerning the Interface Study," 1976, p. 1. This study also revealed different rates of grade "inflation" and/or student improvement between the students' mean Grade 13 marks (68.6%, 70.4%, 73.1% and 79.9%) and their mean First Year grades across the same testing years (59.9%, 57.3%, 58.4%, and 61.1%).

[19] R. Traub, et al, Secondary-Postsecondary Interface Project II: Nature of Students, Vol. 1, 1976, p. xxviii.

are increasing complaints at the university level that the present Ontario School Records do not provide any reliable basis for assumptions on a student's level of competence in a given subject or on the acquisition of general linguistic or mathematical skills.

This led the committee to consider the vexing question of comparability of grades reported by different schools, and of grades in different subjects in the same schools. For example, does a 60% or an 80% in Physics in School A mean the same in School B, and does a 60% or an 80% in Physics mean approximately the same as a 60% or an 80% in English?

The summary of the Review Project II study points "to the existence of 'hard' and 'soft' schools among Anglophone schools in the province."[20] The study concludes also that "the degree to which secondary schools vary in the marks they award for comparable performances is substantial enough to affect whether or not a student is accepted into [some] post-secondary institution[s]."[21]

The key concern here is one of equity among students in the university admission process.

The committee discovered a further lack of comparability arising

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[20] Ibid., p. xxvi.

[21] Ibid., p. xxvii.

from the use by Ontario secondary schools of different percentage ranges of equivalents for comparable levels of standing. Many schools have not yet shifted their "C", "B", and "A" equivalencies from traditional percentage ranges of 60-65%, 66-74%, and 75-100% respectively to the increasingly common ranges of 60-69%, 70-79%, and 80-100%. (Some universities and some faculties within universities are in the same position.) The sharpest effect of this lack of comparability is often borne by the individual student from such schools whose "A" grade of 78% is "read" by the university computer as a "B" with the attendant probability of inequity in the award of scholarships and admission decisions in limited enrolment faculties and programmes.

Another comparability problem, of less significance than the above, but nonetheless confusing to the universities, is the degree of consistency from year to year in marking standards.

C. Committee Conclusions

Following upon these discussions, the committee decided to go beyond the strict terms of its question 6. Mounting evidence points to a nearly universal agreement among educators and the public-at-large that *present* methods of assessing student readiness and achievement, as regards levels of competence in

given subjects or in general linguistic or mathematical skills, are inadequate to meet the needs either of university-bound students or of universities.

Before formulating its recommendations, the committee had to decide whether to concentrate on this present state of inadequacy or on some near future state and the possible implementation of the committee's recommendations. We chose to follow the latter course, with the recognition, however, that some time must necessarily elapse between the present and the desired near future. After first presenting our views for the longer term, we will comment on problems facing universities on the assessment of incoming students during that interim period in an addendum to this Chapter.

It should be noted that the committee's preferred resolution of the question regarding where, when, and how to assess the preparation of university-bound students is based upon the acceptance of other recommendations in this report, and the fulfillment of a number of assumptions:

a) that Ontario's universities agree to adopt minimum admission requirements, both as to a core of subjects and to a Year 5 minimum average, as set out above in Chapter II;

b) that Ontario secondary schools accept an increased standard-

ization of curricular content in those core subjects; and

c) that Ontario universities have an adequate knowledge of that curricular content as well as be willing to share in its formulation.

Our first conclusion is that some province-wide system of assessing achievement of Year 5 students is imperative. We commend the recent declarations by the Minister of Education regarding a new core curriculum in secondary schools[22], greater standardization of curriculum content[23], and the establishment of a Technical Work Group[24], for the stated purpose, among others, of devising "a definite plan of action on how best to improve testing and evaluation in the classroom."[25]

If these initiatives do in fact lead to the adoption for the secondary schools of a core curriculum with a greater degree of standardization of content, if they lead to some form of province-wide evaluation and testing of student achievement, and if the universities have timely access to those testing

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[22]Hon. T.L. Wells, The New Core Curriculum in Secondary Schools (Text of a Statement by Hon. Thomas L. Wells, Minister of Education, October 6), 1976.

[23]Hon. T.L. Wells, Major Change in Curriculum Development (Text of an Address by Hon. Thomas L. Wells, Minister of Education, to the Ontario Legislature, November 12, 1976.)

[24]"Statement by the Hon. Thomas L. Wells, Minister of Education, to the Ontario Legislature, November 26, 1976."

[25]Ibid., p. 5.

results in order to overcome the present lack of reliable inter-school and inter-subject comparability, then the committee concludes that there is no need for the Ontario universities to mount a testing programme of their own for general admissions purposes.

However, if all of this does not transpire, the committee recommends that Ontario universities collectively develop and use examinations for university entrance. We say so reluctantly, because such an exercise would be costly, time-consuming, involving much research and development, but, above all, because it would signal a failure of the cooperative efforts of the two levels of education to resolve this problem.

The committee therefore recommends:

RECOMMENDATION

IV.1 *That, consistent with recommendation II.4, a province-wide, system of assessing the achievements by subject of university-bound students be established under the auspices of the Ministry of Education;*

IV.2 *That Ontario universities not mount any testing programmes of their own for general admissions purposes of qualified*

holders of the Ontario Secondary School Honours Graduation Diploma;

RECOMMENDATION

IV.3 *That, with relucance, if recommendation IV.I is not implemented under the conditions specified above, Ontario universities collectively develop and use examinations for university entrance;*

RECOMMENDATION

IV.4 *That secondary schools establish uniform percentage ranges of equivalencies to letter grades.*

Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain; it will take time to implement these initiatives and suggested recommendations. What are the universities to do now, faced with the present inadequacies of assessing student levels of competence in given subjects or in basic linguistic and/or mathematical skills? With respect to assessing student achievement in given subjects, we would expect that individual university faculties and departments will continue to administer tests to their incoming students for diagnostic purposes. With respect to assessing the level of student competence in basic linguistic and/or mathematical skills, the committee noted that various actions have been taken by some Ontario universities, while others have proposals

under active consideration.

The committee reserves for an addendum our recommendations to the Council of Ontario Universities and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities on this matter.[26]

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[26] Addendum to Chapter IV, p. 53.

Chapter V

BALANCE OF QUESTIONS: OTHER ISSUES

A. Transfers between Colleges and Universities

Question 12: Should transfers between colleges and universities be encouraged?

If *encourage* means an endorsement of Year 4 through a College of Applied Arts and Technology to university route as an alternative to the normal Year 5 to university route, then the committee's answer is a flat: No! If, however, *encourage* means an endorsement of procedures already in place between the colleges and universities which allow individual students to change their post-secondary educational goals as between a college or a university education, then our answer would be in the affirmative. In this regard, the committee noted the recommendations for such procedures developed in 1973 by an Ad Hoc Committee on Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology for the Ontario Universities' Council on Admissions.[27]

B. Impact of Funding on Admissions and Standards

Question 11: Should public funding of post-secondary institutions be made less sensitive to enrolment? Do present funding methods have an impact on academic standards?

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[27] Ontario Universities' Council on Admissions, "Final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology," 1973, p. 2.

To the first part of this question, the committee would defer to the recent efforts of the Council of Ontario Universities' Committee on Operating Grants, which is developing proposals to the Ontario Council on University Affairs to re-examine the role of enrolment within the formula for distributing government grants to Ontario's universities.[28] On the second part of the question, the committee agreed that a formula that was too sensitive to enrolment could easily have a deleterious effect on academic standards for any university succumbing to the temptation to tailor its admission standards to attract "basic income units" rather than truly qualified students.[29]

C. Diversity in Students and Programmes

The committee chose not to address questions 1 and 2 posed in the Joint Ministerial Review (see Appendix A).

These questions, which concerned the nature and extent of diversity both in the academic background of students who enter post-secondary studies and in the academic programmes on both sides of the "interface" border, were considered so broad as to preclude the possibility of specific answers. However, the theme of diversity runs throughout this entire report, insofar as it has concerned itself primarily with recommendations concerning closer articulation between two distinct and complex educational systems.

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[28] Council of Ontario Universities, Approach to the Eighties: Demand/Quality/Resources, 1976.

[29] Council of Ontario Universities' Committee on Operating Grants, Report from the Special Committee to Assess University Policies and Plans, 1976.

It might then be observed that much of what we have said may be relevant to those who wish to frame answers to these questions.

D. Les Étudiants Francophones

The twelve questions posed by the Joint Ministerial Review make no specific reference to Ontario's francophone students, and, indeed, our deliberations and recommendations above in Chapters II - IV should be considered as applying to both francophone and anglophone students, programmes and institutions. However, the committee judged several comments to be in order concerning the transition of francophones from secondary to post-secondary education in Ontario.

Our first comment concerns the opportunities for such students to enrol in university courses and programmes in which French is the language of instruction. The committee is well aware of the special bilingualism grants received each year by a number of universities through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. In spite of these efforts, however, francophone students who wish to pursue their university studies in French continue to experience serious problems. Findings of the Project II research study indicate that a sizeable proportion of francophone students at both the Year 4 and Year 5 levels reporting their plans to leave school for work, or for some other reason, did so as a "second choice"; that is, had a particular post-secondary

programme been available in French, they would have remained in school.[30]

Given all of the Project II *caveats* directed to interpreters of their report's data, it seems safe to infer that there exists some demand for increasing Ontario university programmes in the French language. This demand can be expected to increase if current negotiations lead to the creation of more francophone secondary schools in Ontario.

It is certainly beyond our terms of reference to advise whether and how this demand should be met. The committee wishes simply to draw attention to this finding and to that of another of the Joint Ministerial Review research studies which concluded that "there is need for a thorough evaluation of the current status of educational opportunities for French-speaking students in secondary and post-secondary institutions in Ontario."[31]

Our second comment concerns a specific problem facing these students as they move from secondary school to university, namely, that there is, and will remain for some time at least, a *de facto* requirement for them to be functionally bilingual if they want to have access to the range of programmes offered by Ontario universities. This "requirement" places an added burden on

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[30] R. Traub, et al, Secondary-Postsecondary Interface Project II: Nature of Students, Vol. 1, 1976, pp. 309 - 310.

[31] A.J.C. King, et al, Continuity and Diversity of Courses (The Secondary/Post-Secondary Interface Project III: Nature of Programs), Vol. 1, 1976, p. xxviii.

their attempts while at secondary school to acquire basic skills in their own language and, at the same time, to meet acceptable standards in the English language.

Experience shows that francophone students are forced to handle that extra burden in different ways, to the detriment of their proficiency in English, or to the detriment of the full acquisition of their own language, and, sometimes, to the detriment of their proficiency in both languages. Chances are great that this will prove a real handicap to their chances for success at university. This problem will intensify if in future it becomes normal practice for universities to require the mastery of language skills before admission. Would universities then continue their present offerings of what the Project III study describes as "des efforts louables pour assurer à l'étudiant francophone une maîtrise telle de la langue qu' il puisse accéder à un niveau avancé d'études"?[32]

The committeé is concerned by this problem, and wishes to call special attention to the findings of that study.[33]

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[32] Ibid., p. 603.

[33] See ibid., pp. 8 - 9 and pp. 602 - 603.

Chapter VI

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

There are three themes which underlie the approach to this report and which should be underscored.

The first is that the questions, the documentation, the committee's deliberations, and the recommendations were approached from the university perspective. That the university community suggests a greater role for itself in the design and the evaluation of the secondary school curriculum should not be taken as an indication that current problems are perceived as lying mainly in the secondary school system. The universities must make their requirements clear. But to some extent they are forced to state them by way of expectations regarding the level and nature of preparation of students entering the university system from Year 5. Therefore, it was necessary to make recommendations about the curriculum offered in the secondary school system to university-bound students. Similarly, recommendations about evaluation, gaps and overlaps, and other issues, while drawn from the university perspective, may appear to tread on the ground that rightfully belongs to the secondary schools. The committee regards its recommendations as attempts to be constructive in solving the natural problems attached to the transfer from one system to another. Above all, we stress again our commitment to a cooperative partnership between the secondary schools and the universities.

The second underlying theme of this report is the problem of comparability among and within schools and institutions on both sides of the border. On the university side, for example, it is necessary that the content of first year courses be so specified that the schools can adequately prepare students to undertake work at university level and in specific institutions. Moreover, universities must be clear about the standards of achievement they expect from students for entry to specific programmes, and after admission, clear about standards of achievement in university courses. Similarly, on the secondary school side, standardized grading practices are desirable in order that the universities do not inadvertently fail to treat students equitably in the admissions process, particularly when limited programmes or scholarships are at stake. Comparability of curriculum content among the secondary schools is no less essential. University faculty can only design first year courses for students from a variety of schools when they know the background of the students, particularly in subjects of a sequential nature.

The third underlying theme is found in the order in which the committee addressed the questions. Thus, the questions and recommendations concerning admissions, curriculum, gaps and overlaps, and evaluation were ordered on the basis of priority and interrelatedness. These themes underlie the approach to each chapter of the report, and the chapters are closely interrelated.

The recommendations on admission standards are directed to ensuring: first, that students entering university are adequately prepared for university level work; second, that universities make clear their expectations; and third, that there be a clear understanding between the schools and the universities in matters concerning curriculum content. The recommendations are based on the committee's belief that, from the university perspective, Year 5 is essentially a preparatory year for university study.

Similarly, in order to deal with gaps and overlaps, we have recommended a system to ensure coordination in curricular matters between universities and secondary schools.

Our recommendations on testing are designed to keep evaluation procedures where they belong--in the schools. The committee recognized that the best predictor of success at university is a student's achievement at the Year 5 level. In the interests of reliability and comparability, the committee has recommended a preferred solution to province-wide evaluation. It is based on the expectation that the recommendations concerning admissions and curriculum will be implemented. Realizing that implementation will take time, the committee has suggested immediate measures for evaluation at the discretion of individual institution. In addition, it is pointed out that, if an adequate long-term solution is not found, then the universities may be forced to establish their own entrance examinations.

ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER IV

Recommendations to the Council of Ontario Universities and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities on achievement testing

The committee has focussed on the broad principles which should govern the articulation between the universities and secondary schools. Despite this long-term perspective, the committee is anxious that the Joint Ministerial Review will give rise to decisions on definite actions; these decisions should, without being precipitate, be taken without undue delay. Many parties share a sense of crisis on certain issues under review. Also, it must be borne in mind that a number of our recommendations will take some years to result in significant changes, even if steps are taken immediately. A case in point is that improved communication on curriculum will require considerable time before enhanced coordination is visible.

Another example, and the subject of this addendum, is the development of the envisioned new system to evaluate the acquisition of basic skills by students leaving the secondary schools. An adequate evaluation system will take some time to design and implement.

The committee has concluded that a province-wide evaluation system is imperative. We hope that a system which can meet the universities' needs will be developed by the schools, in consultation with post-secondary educators. We also believe that if this does not transpire,

the universities collectively should develop examinations for university entrance. Whichever the outcome, substantial research and development will be needed.

The 1960's saw a great deal of such activity, leading to the establishment of the Service for Admission to College and University. With the demise of SACU at the beginning of the 1970's, general disillusionment led to a hiatus not only in the application of testing, but in experimentation. Activity started again in Ontario with the experimental achievement testing initiated in the fall of 1975 by the Council of Ontario Universities, in cooperation with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education. This project involved the testing in English and mathematics achievement of certain groups of entering freshmen at four universities (Brock [English only], McMaster, Queen's and Waterloo). This work was continued in the fall of 1976, with the testing of entering freshmen at Carleton, McMaster, and Toronto (Erindale College) on English achievement. Analysis of these projects continues and while much has been learned, it is clear that a great deal of further research and development is needed.

Apart from these efforts organized at the system level, there has also been considerable experimentation at individual universities. Recently, major English testing projects have been undertaken at Guelph, Queen's and Waterloo. On a smaller scale, a number of

individual university departments have been administering diagnostic tests of skills in particular disciplines. Various universities are now on the verge of undertaking other testing initiatives.

In February, 1977, COU received a submission from representatives of six institutions exercised over English proficiency. One of the recommendations was:

> That the Ministry of Colleges and Universities help finance a programme of English language testing for university students.
>
> The test would be compulsory for all incoming students in participating universities, faculties or divisions. It would be used for placement or advisory purposes. Some universities are experimenting with tests of their own devising while others are considering the test administered under the auspices of the Council of Ontario Universities in September, 1976. We expect that the desired test will include a sample of writing.
>
> We would ask the Ministry to pay the cost of testing, including the developmental work, scoring and analysis associated with it. Participating institutions would pay the cost of administering the test. 34

The committee concurs with the thrust of this recommendation, as a short-term measure, since it believes that developmental testing activities in the universities should be continued pending the evolution of the desired province-wide evaluation system. Experimental testing can provide for the interim, useful feedback to the schools and diagnostic information for the universities, while meeting its main objective of generating results useful for the

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[34] D. Morton, "Memorandum on English Testing and Remedial Programmes," 1977.

design of the eventual system. The results can be of benefit whether the province-wide testing develops under the Ministry of Education or the universities.

The initiative should rest with individual universities to design and administer their own testing projects. This will ensure a diversity of approaches, which can relate closely to each institution's perceived needs, and enable a system-level comparison of various approaches. Further, the committee believes that universities should assume some of the costs, including purchase of the tests, administration, and scoring. Analysis of the results by the universities should be supported by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

The Council of Ontario Universities should play a coordinating role. This coordination should have two aspects. The first is the provision of a forum for exchange of views, not only amongst the universities, but also with the Ministries concerned, the colleges, and the secondary schools. The second aspect of coordination should be a research programme, providing services for the analysis and comparison of university findings. The coordination should be funded by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

We do not feel it appropriate here to go into further details or to provide a precise costing, until it is known whether our proposals will find acceptance. Indication of an order of magnitude on the

financial side might, however, be helpful. In our view, $50,000 per annum provided by MCU could accomplish a great deal. The funds might be granted to COU, which could establish a mechanism for entertaining university applications for support of individual experiments.

Pending implementation of the recommendations in Chapter IV, the committee recommends as an immediate step that:

RECOMMENDATIONS

A1 *Initiatives by individual universities in experimental testing be supported in part by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and;*

A2 *The Council of Ontario Universities play a coordinating role in such initiatives with the purpose of assisting in the evolution of the desired province-wide evaluation system.*

March 11, 1977

APPENDIX A

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION/MINISTRY OF
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Review of the Interface Between Secondary
and Post-Secondary Education in Ontario

Because of public and professional concern about the preparation of students for, and their appropriate placement and assimilation into post-secondary studies in the Universities and in the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities have begun a review of public policies that bear on the Interface Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Education in Ontario.

The following specific questions have been raised in the context of the review:

1. What is the nature and extent of diversity in the academic background of students who enter post-secondary studies? Is there an appropriate balance between fostering individual freedom, responsibility and self-development in the academic context on the one hand and providing a reasonable degree of consistency in curriculum and standards on the other hand?

2. What is the nature and extent of diversity in academic programs at secondary and post-secondary institutions? Is the present degree of diversity producing a desirable level of variety in the academic backgrounds of students, or is it producing excessive heterogeneity?

3. What is the extent of the overlap and duplication in programming and course offerings at the secondary schools, colleges and universities? Is this duplication at an acceptable level as an accommodation to the goal of fostering greater response to individual differences, or is it unnecessary and uneconomic?

4. Are there gaps between programs at the different levels which make it difficult for students to effect a smooth transfer from secondary to post-secondary education?

5. Is there a need for more articulation and co-ordination in curriculum between secondary and post-secondary education?

6. Are present methods of assessing student readiness and achievement at the secondary schools, colleges and universities adequate? Do they meet the appropriate needs of students and

parents as well as those of the institutions themselves and society as a whole?

7. Are university and college admission standards appropriate? Given the limited public resources available, do these admission standards serve the needs of individuals, society as a whole, and of the institutions themselves?

8. Should universities and colleges require for admission, preparation in specific subjects with standardized content?

9. Should universities be encouraged to admit students directly from the Secondary School Graduation Diploma level (Grade 12), or students with even less background and preparation?

10. Should universities and colleges be encouraged to give advanced placement to students who have demonstrated a superior level of achievement at secondary school?

11. Should public funding of post-secondary institutions be made less sensitive to enrolment? Do present funding methods have an impact on academic standards?

12. Should transfers between colleges and universities be encouraged?

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